

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 002439

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2015

TAGS: PREL KWBG IS SETTLEMENTS

SUBJECT: GOI ISSUES TENDERS FOR 50 HOUSING UNITS IN ELKANA,
ANOTHER 600-700 IN THE WORKS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Gene A. Cretz for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

This cable has been cleared by Consulate General Jerusalem.

1. (C) Summary: Press reported on April 18 that the Israel Lands Authority issued a tender for 50 plots to build private, single-family houses in the Elkana settlement of the West Bank. According to the tender, these plots will be available for sale between May 6 and June 16. Press reports indicate that the infrastructure work is finished and that construction can begin in two to three months. Peace Now told econoff that this new neighborhood contributes to creating contiguity in the Ariel bloc. The Economic Cooperation Foundation cautioned that the USG should expect at least an additional 2,000 housing units over the next year. End summary.

2. (U) Press reported yesterday, April 18, that the Israel Lands Authority issued a tender for 50 plots to construct single-family houses in a northern neighborhood of the Elkana settlement in the West Bank. According to the tender, which was published in Yediot Aharonot, the plots of land will range from 344 to 530 square meters, can be leased for 98 years, with an option to extend for an additional 98 years, and will cost a minimum of \$11,000. According to the tender, the contractor who will develop the plots is Margolim and Ariel Engineering and Management, Ltd, and the houses will be privately financed by the residents. The tender states that the "expenditure for development" will be approximately \$55,000 to \$70,000, depending on the size of the plot (Note: Post assumes "expenditure for development" means the cost of building a house on a plot. End note). The plots will be available for sale between May 9 and June 16. Press reports indicate that the infrastructure work has been completed and construction could begin in two to three months.

3. (U) Additional press reports today, April 19, quote the mayor of Elkana, Yehuda Cohen, as saying that another 600-700 housing units have or are in the final stages of receiving the necessary permits for construction.

4. (C) Dror Etkes, Settlements Watch Coordinator of Peace Now, told econoff that this expansion of Elkana is intended to help create contiguity in the Ariel bloc, and that the USG "should expect more" of these announcements in the future. He said that there is continuous building along Route 5 just south of Elkana, and opined that the GOI is planning to fill in the land between the seamline barrier and the Green Line. Boaz Karni, Treasurer of the Economic Cooperation Foundation, also commented that this announcement was not surprising, and said that we can expect tenders for at least an additional 2,000 housing units throughout the West Bank over the next year. He explained that this construction is a way to make the separation barrier a permanent fixture. Karni cautioned that the U.S. should also watch the phenomenon of building permanent housing in illegal outposts. He cited the example of an outpost near Neve Daniel -- probably Neve Daniel North -- in the Gush Etzion bloc, that has established 30-40 permanent houses in the past six months. Finally, BG (res) Baruch Spiegel, Ministry of Defense Advisor, told Charge that he would brief more fully on the announcement during their scheduled April 20 meeting, but that there was really nothing "new" on the issue except the press play.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's
Classified SIPRNET website.
